

How female winemakers are shaping the way we drink

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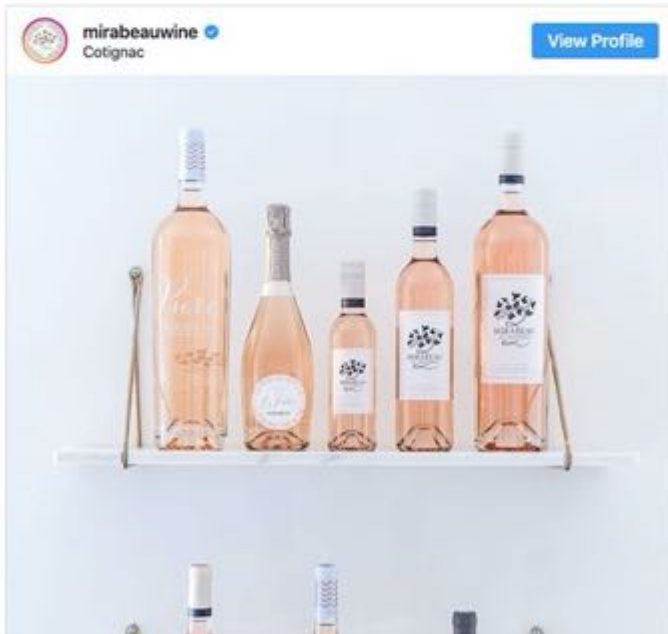
In a field notoriously dominated by men, more and more women are bursting onto the wine scene, shaping the way we drink and influencing the story behind the bottles served up in restaurants and supermarket shelves.

And while working the land can be punishing – 6am alarm calls, all that picking and pruning, grape-stained hands – on the up side, knocking on the cellar doors and carving out a career as a winemaker has many advantages.



After all, which wine lover doesn't dream of living in a famous wine region, holding the key to a chateau surrounded by vineyards, hosting tastings and wine dinners – or simply being more at one with nature, glass in hand?

And with greater opportunities, from studying viticulture and oenology to marketing and sales, in many ways it's easier than ever to find your feet in the world of wine – and you don't need to be born into a winemaking family to know your vino.



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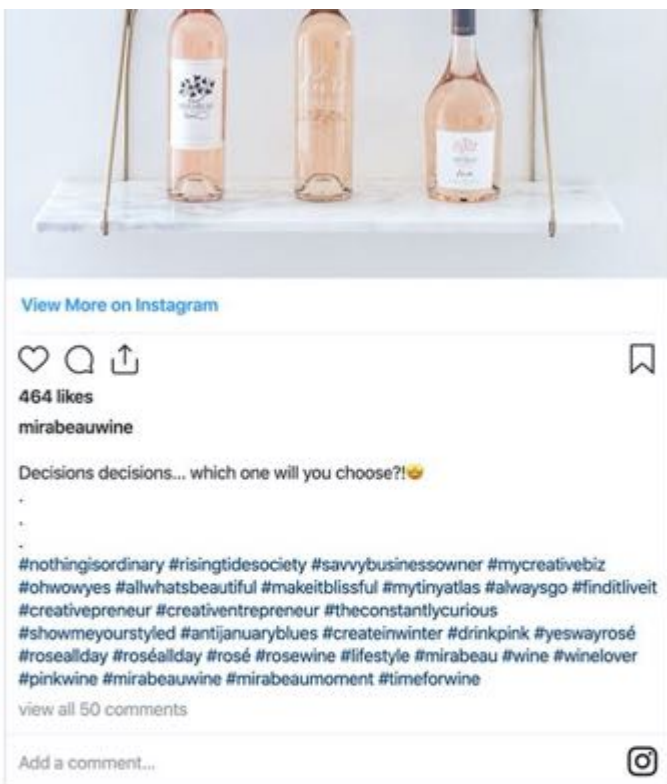


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As Jeany Cronk, founder of Mirabeau, who produce award-winning rosé wines in Provence, South of France, points out: "Being a sideways entry to winemaking, I had a lot to learn when we started 10 years ago and the support from other women has been invaluable.

"To this day, all our oenologists have been female. In many ways, winemaking comes so naturally to women, who have an innate creativity when it comes to assembling wines – it plays to our artistic side," she adds. "And rosé is a pretty and playful wine, still loved predominantly by women, so lending our palettes to make it seems natural as well.

"It's a joy to see so many more female heads popping up when we sit around the table for regional meetings, clearly a sign of the times of women establishing themselves in a lasting way in what was hitherto a very male dominated world," adds Cronk.



(Mirabeau/PA)

A pretty soft pink, try their Mirabeau Pure Rosé 2018, Côtes de Provence, France (£14.99, [Waitrose](#)), with its exquisite aromas of citrus and pink grapefruit, elegant flavours of summer berries and balancing acidity.

Of course, it does help if you want to follow in the family footsteps and a history of grape growing. "I'm lucky enough to live 500m from the family farm, so I don't need to set the alarm clock too early,

around 6:45," says Camille Besson, fourth generation winemaker at Domaine Besson in Chablis, Burgundy, who sell their wines to 15 countries around the world.

"I'm an oenologist, so I love spending time in the cellar but now I wouldn't want to only be involved in the winemaking process. In fact, by working more on the commercial side of things, this has enabled me to know what consumers think about my wines, which has given me an essential insight for my role," says Besson.



(Domaine Besson/PA)

Drinking beautifully, try her **Domaine Besson Petit Chablis 2015, France** (£14.95, [Cellar Door Wines](#)), which has a lovely citrusy freshness and subtle mineral complexity.

Elsewhere in France, even though leading ladies such as Lily Bollinger and Madame Clicquot have been inspirational to so many generations, Elisabeth Sarcelet (awarded the prestigious title of Champagne Winemaker of the Year in 2016) is one of the few female cellar masters in Champagne.

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"Taking inspiration from the words of the great French novelist George Sand (pen name for Amandine Lucile Aurore Dupin) when she said 'champagne creates wonder', my dream is to create champagne with as small an environmental impact as possible, and to drink it with my grandchildren as a message of hope," says Sarcelet.



(Champagne Castelnau/PA)

Full of poise, you can't beat her Champagne Castelnau Brut NV, Champagne, France (£27.95, Amazon) for its outstanding fruity freshness and toasty richness, which always leaves a lasting impression.



Meanwhile, Spanish winemaker Rosalina Molina shows what can be achieved when you decide to plant a vineyard at an altitude of 1,100 metres, where the extreme weather (hot summers and cold

winters) has the potential to produce concentrated wines with great fruit and freshness.



(Altolandon/PA)

As well as being one of the highest-altitude vineyards in Spain, Manchuela, southeast of Madrid, is also one of the smallest. And while the native bobal grape pays the bills, Molina has a bunch of others to press.

We love her Altolandon Mil Historias Organic Syrah 2017, Spain (£13.99, [Virgin Wines](#)) for its gorgeous notes of plush black fruits, yarn of sweet berries and spice, along with a fresh, crunchy finish.



elisabetta geppetti, her and daughter clara gentili (fattoria le pupille/PA)

Known as The Lady of Morellino, Elisabetta Geppetti and her daughter Clara Gentili are the female powerhouse behind the label Fattoria Le Pupille. Aged 20 when she first took over the reins of the family estate, Geppetti is described as a woman of exceptional energy and vision, and a pioneer in the region of Maremma, southern Tuscany.



(Fattoria Le Pupille/PA)

A sangiovese that sings from the glass, their Fattoria Le Pupille, Morellino di Scansano 2018 DOCG, Tuscany, Italy (£19.96, [Armit Wines](#)) is a complex, cherry fruited empress and charms with its fragrance, freshness and silky smooth palate.

An Instagram post from the account 'vassefelixwines'. The profile picture shows a wine glass and the name 'Vasse Felix'. The main image is a woman in a black t-shirt and jeans walking through a winery aisle, holding a glass of wine. The background shows wooden barrels and a doorway. Below the image are icons for likes, comments, and shares, followed by the text '325 likes' and the username 'vassefelixwines'. The caption reads: 'Thrilled to see our two Icon wines - the 2015 Tom Cullity and 2017 Heytesbury Chardonnay - feature in the @james.suckling Top 100 Australian Wines of 2019! Listed at #53 with 96 points, "The 2015 Cullity is all about finesse and power.. Just keeps on growing on the palate." Thanks @StockWine for the kind words. Peruse the full list and reviews via link in bio.'

#MargaretRiver #Wine #Winemaking #JamesSuckling #Top100 #AustralianWine
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Heading Down Under, tractor-driving and grape-stomping is second nature to winemaker Virginia Willcock, who cut her teeth at her parents' small family vineyard and joined Vasse Felix, Margaret River's founding wine estate as chief winemaker in 2006.

With an armload of medals and 27 vintages under her belt, Willcock is cited as one of the most influential female winemakers in Australia. As she writes on the Vasse Felix website: "Make the wines you love to drink" – and who wouldn't drink to that?



(Vasse Felix/PA)

With its maritime influence, **Vasse Felix Filius Chardonnay 2018, Margaret River, Australia (£12.99, Ocado)** is a joyous glass with its delicate stone fruit aromas and flavours, fine thread of citrusy freshness and tingly acidity.

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